

LIST OF SOURCES

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Risk Factors and Protective Measures for Taxi and Livery Drivers, US Department of Labor, OSHA, May 2000

OSHA Fact Sheet: Preventing Violence against Taxi and For-Hire Drivers, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, US Department of Labor, April 2010.

American Journal of Preventive Medicine, Effectiveness of Taxicab Security Equipment in Reducing Driver Homicide Rates, June 11, 2013.

Taxi Driver Safety Worksheet, provided by GPD Taxi Inspector Alfred Moore

Materials developed by Western Iowa Tech Community College, under a Susan Harwood grant from the US Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, compiled by Angela Lawson

Taxicab Driver Safety, by Gord Barton, Taxi Training Instructor, <http://www.taxi-library.org/gord28.htm>.

This informational booklet is sponsored by:

Greensboro Police Department
Operational Support Division
Taxi Inspector
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Greensboro Police Department

Safety Tips for Taxi, Livery and For-Hire Drivers



Dealing with Risks and Workplace Violence

Purpose

The purpose of this booklet is to make taxi, livery and for-hire drivers aware of workplace risks and how to deal with them.



Goal

The Greensboro Police Department wants you to be safe while you are at work. You can reduce your chances of being harmed by following the tips in this booklet.



QUIZ ANSWERS



1. FALSE

2. TRUE

3. TRUE

4. TRUE

5. Avoiding eye contact; hostile stare; snarling; looking angry; sudden movements; tensing of body

6. "I just started;" or "It's been a slow day/night;"

7. How you look sends a definite message to others and implies that you should be treated professionally.

8. To make sure that someone did not leave something dangerous in the cab.

9. TRUE

10. Make eye contact; smile; greet the passenger

TEST YOURSELF

1. The majority of attacks occur when the driver is outside of the cab.

*(Circle **TRUE** or **FALSE**)*

2. Risk factors include: working at night, dealing with strangers, and working alone.

*(Circle **TRUE** or **FALSE**)*

3. Partitions, or shields, have been shown to decrease attacks.

*(Circle **TRUE** or **FALSE**)*

4. Failure to report acts of violence increases the risk.

*(Circle **TRUE** or **FALSE**)*

5. List some body language to look for.

6. What is one way you may want to respond if a customer asks, "Have you been busy?"

7. Why is a professional appearance important?

8. Why is it important to check the back seat of your cab before your shift?

9. It is a good idea to keep the doors locked when the cab is unoccupied.

*(Circle **TRUE** or **FALSE**)*

10. List ways that you can display a good attitude.

Quiz Answers on Next Page

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FACTS

In 2010, the Bureau of Labor Statistics showed that taxi drivers' homicide rates were between 21 to 33 times higher than the national average for all workers.



Photo of a taxi driver robbed at gunpoint.

In 2010, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) showed that taxi, livery and for-hire drivers were over 20 times more likely to be murdered on the job than other workers.

In 2012, Greensboro Police had: 649 aggravated assaults, 21 homicides and 431 robberies of individuals. That's a total of 1101 offense reports!

Learn ways to protect yourself. Don't let this be you!



SAFETY EQUIPMENT

Various safety equipment is available and can be an important tool to protect you on the job.

First-Aid Kits

Be sure to keep a first-aid kit in your vehicle in case of emergency.

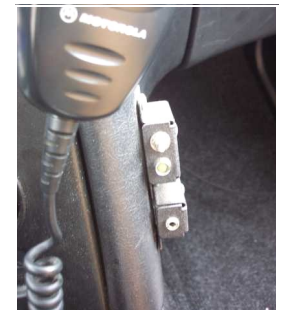


Security Cameras

Recording activity inside the vehicle discourages violent behavior, and helps identify passengers if an assault occurs.

Silent Alarms

A panic button, external light and/or radio communication allow you to safely request help.

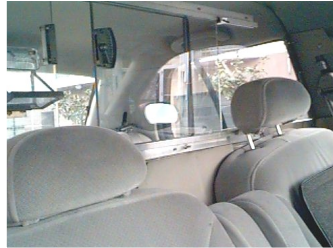


SAFETY EQUIPMENT

Various safety equipment is available and can be an important tool to protect you on the job.

Bullet-Resistant Glass

Barriers, partitions, or shields, between you and passengers help prevent robberies, injuries and death.



GPS

Global positioning satellite systems (vehicle tracking devices) allow you to be located in your time of need.



Caller ID

Dispatcher use of caller ID will help trace location of fares.



Cashless Fare System

The use of credit or debit cards will discourage robberies since you will not have large amounts of cash.

FATAL SCENARIOS

The typical fatal scenario is a night-time shooting from inside the cab. Most deaths are due to head or neck injuries, and most of the assailants are in their teens. Other statistics include:

- 94% of the attacks occurred when the driver is inside the cab.
- 85% of the fatal injuries are gunshot wounds.
- 82% of the assaults occur at night.
- 74% of the deaths are due to head and neck injuries.
- 64% of the deaths are from gunshots to the head.
- 66% of the assailants are under age twenty.
- 47% of the assailants act alone.
- 25% of the assailants are outside the cab.



RISK FACTORS

Drivers face many risk factors because they are involved in potentially violent occupations. These risks include:

- Working with the public
- Dealing with cash transactions
- Working long hours, alone and in isolated areas
- Working at night and in poorly-lit settings
- Working in high-crime areas
- Dealing with people under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol
- Language and cultural differences
- Encounters with strangers
- Not being alert to your surroundings and nearby bystanders when dropping off and picking up passengers



WHAT TO DO IF . . .

You are in heavy traffic—use defensive driving tactics, staying alert to cars around you and those parked along the street.

You pick up a fare (day or night)—give your dispatcher a good description of the fare so someone else knows what the fare looks like.

The fare gives an “unknown” destination—advise dispatch of the problem. Don’t get trapped in an alley, back lane or isolated area. Refuse to give them a ride.

You are robbed—do not resist or fight back. Hand over any money and even the car if that will keep the robber from harming or seriously injuring you.

You do not have a fare—always lock your doors and have your windows rolled down just enough to get some air so no one can reach in and grab you.

You have a ‘flag-down’ fare—be cautious, especially at night, anytime a stranger flag-down fare is picked up and needs to get somewhere in a hurry.

Remember:

No amount of money or property is worth risking your life!

WHAT TO DO IF . . .

You have an emergency—use whatever communication system you have (panic button, code words with dispatchers, radio signals, etc.)

The passenger fails to pay—do not chase down someone who fails to pay. It is not worth risking your life or severe injury.

Faced with an angry outburst—speak quietly in brief statements. It is okay to let them blow off steam or ‘vent’.

You are dealing with a ‘know-it-all’—do not argue. You can point out facts, but allow them to ‘save face’.

You are threatened with a weapon—remain calm, cooperate and look for opportunities to get help.

The passenger wants to argue—keep your cool. Maintain a calm, professional tone so you do not escalate a minor situation into a major conflict.

Remember:

No amount of money or property is worth risking your life!

THINGS TO LOOK FOR

Passengers who:

- Look nervous
- Fidget or act disorderly
- Sit directly behind you



Be cautious when:

- One person hails you (or the call says it is one passenger), and more people suddenly arrive—drive on.



Observe Body Language:

- Do they avoid eye contact?
- Do they use a hostile stare, snarl or look angry?
- Watch for quick, sudden movements or tensing of the body that can signal a person is ‘ready to fight’.



PERSONAL BEHAVIOR

- **Avoid driving fatigued.** When you are tired, you are not as alert about passengers and/or driving conditions.
- **Do not wear expensive-looking jewelry.** It could make you a target for a robbery.
- **Avoid wearing anything around your neck.** It could be used to choke you.
- **Use good grooming and daily hygiene.** Dress in clean, comfortable and nice clothing. How you look sends a definite message to others. A neat, professional appearance shows that you should be treated professionally.
- **Be friendly and cooperative with police.** This can serve you well if you are ever in trouble.



PERSONAL BEHAVIOR

- **Keep an eye on passengers through use of a mirror.** Always ask single passengers to move from directly behind you (cite company policy, safety issue, etc.).
- **Have a good attitude.** Make eye contact, smile, and greet the passenger. Polite, friendly, respectful behavior will probably increase your tips and increase the odds that you will be treated in a similar manner.
- **Know your city.** Nothing irritates a customer more than a driver who does not take a direct route or does not know how to get to their destination. You also need to know where to go in case of an emergency situation.
- **Sometimes language can be an issue.** If in doubt, you may want to carry a notepad and ask the passenger to write down the address.

